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For the linguist interested in typology and language universals, this paper suggests the usefulness of a taxonomy of copula and copula-like constructions in the world's languages and the elaboration of hypotheses of synchronic variation and diachronic change in this part of language. For the linguist interested in child language development, the paper repeats earlier suggestions (Ferguson 1964) that the notion of simplicity may be a useful one in accounting for the development of grammar in the child, repeats the point that baby talk is largely initiated by adults on the basis of existing patterns, and suggests further that the telegraphic style used by young children may in part be based on the fact that adults in their attempt to simplify their speech (i.e. use baby talk) tend to omit items such as the copula, prepositions, articles, and inflectional endings. For the linguist interested in pidgins and creoles, the most important suggestion of the paper is probably the view that the foreigner talk of a speech community may serve as an incipient pidgin. This view asserts that the initial source of the grammatical structure of a pidgin is the more or less systematic simplification of the lexical source language which occurs in the foreigner talk register of its speakers rather than the grammatical structure of the language(s) of the other users of the pidgin. (Author/AMM)

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Absence of copula and the notion of simplicity: a study of normal speech, baby talk, foreigner talk and pidgins

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0. The purpose of this paper is to examine one feature of human language in a general typological framework in order to obtain some insights into the notion of grammatical simplicity. The feature in question is the presence in some languages, or special varieties or registers of a single language, of an overt connecting link, or COPULA, between nominal subjects and complements in equational clauses of the type X is Y[1] as compared with the absence of such a link in other languages or other varieties of the same language. Thus, English My brother is a student and Japanese Ani wa gakkusee desu differ from Russian Moj brat student (om) or Arabic 'Axi tilmiðun by having a copula (is, desu) which has no overt equivalent in the latter two languages. Similarly, English Your mother is outside or has gone out may correspond to baby talk Mommy bye-bye with no copula, or French La machine est grande 'The machine is big' corresponds to Haitian Creole Machin-nâ gro.

1. Normal speech. It may safely be assumed that all natural languages have grammatical machinery for equational clauses, but the details vary considerably from one language to another. There has been very little systematic study of clause types across languages, and future investigations may show the inadequacy of the crude classification used here, but it seems helpful for the purposes at hand. There seem to be two main types of language as far as equational clauses are concerned. Type A has

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a copula in all normal neutral equational clauses; the absence of the copula is limited to certain set expressions or signals a particular style or register, such as proverbs (e.g. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.) In such languages the copula generally functions very similarly (i.e. has similar patterns of allomorphs, exhibits similar grammatico-semantic categories, occurs in similar constructions) to the members of the major word class of verbs. It generally differs from verbs, however, in certain respects, in some languages so much as to constitute a separate word class, in other languages in such a way as to belong to a distinct subclass of verbs ("auxiliaries"). In Indo-European languages of type A the copula typically has a unique pattern of suppletion (e.g. Latin es-~fu-). In type A languages the copula often appears also in existential clauses of the type There is/are X, although they may have special constructions with the copula (e.g. English there is/are), or not use it at all (e.g. French il y a),in such clauses.

Type B languages normally have no copula in equational clauses. The copula is invariably absent in a main clause when both members of the clause (subject and complement) are present, the clause is timeless or unmarked present in time, the complement is attributive (i.e. adjectival rather than nominal), and the subject is third person. In many type B languages the absence of a copula goes beyond these minimum limits. For example, probably in most type B languages the copula is absent with first and second person subjects as well as third (e.g. Russian Ja student 'I am a student), although in some the absence is limited to the third person

(e.g. Hungarian Én diák vagyok 'I am a student' but Ő diák 'He is a student'). In many type B languages the copula is absent also when the complement is a noun or pronoun, as in the Russian and Arabic examples previously cited, although in some the absence is limited to adjectival complements (e.g. Haitian Creole Chwal yo parésé 'The horses are lazy' but Chwal yo sé étalô 'The horses are stallions', Mc Connell 1953 p. 20). Again, many type B languages have no copula in either main or dependent clause but some have it only in dependent clauses, e.g. Bengali Se chatro 'He is a student' but Se jodi chatro hŏĕ...'If he is a student...' (Sableski 1965).

In all type B languages there seem to be conditions under which a copula must be used. The most widespread such condition is when a tense other than present is called for. Thus, English My brother was a student has Russian and Arabic equivalents with an overt was in Moj brat byl student, 'Axī kana tilmîðan.[3] Also, most type B languages seem to use a copula if only one member of the equational clause (subject or complement) is present, or if because of an inverted word order the copula would be in an "exposed" position. [4] Thus, Haitian Creole Machin nâ gro ' The machine is big' but Sé gro 'It is big'; Chwal yo nâ châ 'The horses are in the field' but Koté chwal yo vé? 'Where are the horses?' Finally, in type B languages when emphasis is put on the semantic link, as in definitions and exclamatory pronouncements, a copula equivalent is used, either a special verb (e.g. "stands", "is found") or a pronoun (e.g. "he", "they"), or a verb "to be"

which is normally used in other tenses or in existential clauses. Thus, Russian čto jest' istina? 'What is truth?'

In type B languages there is often a special negative construction used in equational clauses without copula and not elsewhere in the language. Thus Arabic and Bengali have special negative copulas, lays-~las- and nɔ-~no- respectively, which are used only here: Arabic Laysa (lastu) tilmīðan 'He is not (I am not) a student'; Bengali Se chatro nɔ̃ 'He is not a student', Ami chatro noi 'I am not a student.' Some, however, have the same negative formative in these clauses that appears in the negation of verbal predicates (e.g. Russian Ja ne student, Haitian Creole Mabhin nâ pa gro.).

Type B languages typically have a different verb or verb equivalent for existential clauses, e.g. Bengali ach- 'exist, be' Russian jest' 'there is/are/, Haitian Creole gê, and sometimes they have still another special form of clause negation for this, e.g. Bengali nei, Russian net, Haitian Creole nâ pwê. Bengali illustrates the full range of possibilities here (cf. Sableski):

eta boi	this is a book	eta boi nɔ̃	this isn't a book
ekhane boi ache	there are books here	ekhane boi nei	there aren't any books here

2. Simplified speech. It may be assumed that every speech community has in its verbal repertoire a variety of registers appropriate for use with particular statuses, roles, or situations. It may further be assumed that many, perhaps all, speech communities have registers of a special kind for use with people who are regarded for one reason or another as unable to

readily understand the normal speech of the community (e.g. babies, foreigners, deaf people). These forms of speech are generally felt by their users to be simplified versions of the language, hence easier to understand, and they are often regarded as imitation of the way the person addressed uses the language himself. Thus, the baby talk which is used by adults in talking to young children is felt to be easier for the child to understand and is often asserted to be an imitation of the way the children speak. Such registers as baby talk are, of course, culturally transmitted like any other part of the language and may be quite systematic and resistant to change. Unfortunately they have not been studied very much; for summary and references, cf. Ferguson 1964.

Another register of simplified speech which has been little studied, although it seems quite widespread and may even be universal, is the kind of "foreigner talk" which is used by speakers of a language to outsiders who are felt to have very limited command of the languae or no knowledge of it at all. Many /all?/ languages seem to have particular features of pronunciation, grammar, and lexicon which are characteristically used in this situation. For example, a speaker of Spanish who wishes to communicate with a foreigner who has little or no Spanish will typically use the infinitive of the verb or the third singular rather than the usual inflected forms, and he will use mi 'me' for yo 'I' and omit the definite and indefinite articles: me ver soldado 'me /to-/ see soldier' for yo veo al soldado 'I see the soldier'. Such Spanish is felt by native speakers of the language to be the way foreigners

talk, and it can most readily be elicited from Spanish-speaking informants by asking them how foreigners speak.

Similarly, Arabs sometimes use a simplified form of the language in talking to non-native speakers, such as Armenian immigrants. This form is sometimes referred to as the way Armenians talk and can be elicited by asking for Armenian Arabic. It is characterized by such features as the use of the third person masculine singular of the imperfect of the verb for all persons, genders, numbers, and tenses (e.g. ya'rif 'he knows' for "you know", "I know", etc.) and the use of the long forms of the numbers 3-10 with a singular noun instead of the normal contracted form of the number with a plural noun (e.g. tlāte sā'a for tlat sā'at 'three hours'). Some Armenians and other non-native speakers of Arabic do sometimes use these expressions, but it is not clear whether this comes as a direct result of interference from their own languages or results at least in part from imitation of Arabs' use of foreigner talk.

In both baby talk and foreigner talk the responses of the person addressed affect the speaker, and the verbal interaction may bring some modification of the register from both sides. The normal outcome of the use of baby talk is that as the child grows up he acquires the other normal, non-simplified registers of the language and retains some competence in baby talk for use in talking with young children and in such displaced functions as talking to a pet or with a lover.

The usual outcome of the use of foreigner talk is that one side or the other acquires an adequate command of the other's language and the

foreigner talk is used in talking to, reporting on, or riduculing people who have not yet acquired adequate command of the language. If the communication context is appropriate, however, this foreigner talk may serve as an incipient pidgin and become a more widely used form of speech.

Baby talk and foreigner talk are not the only forms of simplified speech. English, for example, has special usages for telegrams and formal instructions which resemble baby talk and foreigner talk in omitting definite article, prepositions, and copula, and the resemblance of these usages to early childhood language behavior has been noticed (Brown and Bellugi 1964 pp. 138-9). The conventional nature of these usages, which native speakers explain as being more economical of space, time, or money, is shown by their use where the limitations are irrelevant, as with instructions printed on a package where there is plenty of empty space or choices of wording in telegrams where either wording is below the number of words allowed at minimum cost.

3. Simplicity. The notion of simplicity in language and language description has been a perennial issue in linguistics as in other disciplines, and there is little agreement on what constitutes simplicity. Some recent work in linguistics has been concerned with a "simplicity metric" in evaluating alternative grammars of partial grammars. The notion of simplicity in language itself, however, is only indirectly related to this. In the present paper we are concerned with the concept of simplicity in language, i.e. the possibility of rating some part of a language (e.g. a paradigm, a construction, an utterance, a clause type, a phonological sequence) as in some sense simpler than another comparable part in the same language or

another language. For sample statements of this sort, cf. Ferguson 1959 pp. 33-4.

The notion of simplicity in language is important in several ways, since it may be related to theories of language universals, language acquisition, and language loss. Jakobson and others have assumed that, other things being equal, the simpler of two comparable features is likely to be the more widespread among languages of the world, the earlier acquired in child language development, and the later lost under pathological conditions. Even though the last of these assumptions may offer great difficulties because of the varied nature of pathological conditions, there seems to be some validity for the first two. [6] Accordingly, the creation of taxonomies involving the dimension simple-complex and investigation of these across many languages offers promise in the development of the general theory of language.

Also, any full-scale description of a language should identify simple vs. complex (i.e. primary vs. derivative) along a number of dimensions and thus offer predictions about possible orders of acquisition of the respective features. This process of prediction and empirical confirmation offers an opportunity for checking the validity of grammars which goes outside the linguists' intuitions about languages. For examples of predictions of this kind, cf. Ferguson 1966.[7]

The present paper suggests an additional approach to the study of simplicity in language, viz. the investigation of simplified registers, such as baby talk and foreigner talk, which give some indication of what

folk grammatical analysis rates as relatively simple or easy versus complex or difficult.

4. Hypotheses. Even on the basis of the largely impressionistic and anecdotal accounts of simplified speech now available, it is possible to hazard some universal hypotheses. For example, "If a language has an inflectional system, this will tend to be replaced in simplified speech such as baby talk and foreigner talk by uninflected forms (e.g. simple nominative for the noun; infinitive, imperative, or third person singular for the verb). Several such hypotheses might even be subsumed under a more general hypothesis of the form: "If a language has a grammatical category which clearly involves an unmarked-marked opposition,[8] the unmarked term tends to be used for both in simplified speech." This general hypothesis may raise more problems than it solves at this point in our understanding of grammatical systems, but it illustrates the kind of hypotheses which may be generated in the study of language universals. A fairly specific kind of universal hypothesis is the central point of this paper.

In pairs of clauses differing by presence and absence of a copula in a given language, speakers will generally rate the one without the copula as simpler and easier to understand. Also, studies of child language development seem to show that children, apart from some marginal cases, first make equational clauses without a copula and only later--if the language has a copula--acquire the construction with the copula. Thus, even though the linguistic analyst may find that in the full normal speech

absence of the copula is to be regarded as a deletion and hence grammatically more complex than its presence, and even though languages which lack a copula in equational clauses may have quite complicated patterns of allomorphy and distribution of symonyms in verbs "to be", it seems wise to make the assumption that other things being equal, absence of the copula is simpler than presence of the copula.

Therefore, given that languages can be classified into two types according to their equational clauses, type A with copula and type B without copula, then:

Hypothesis 1. In languages of type A, the copula in equational clauses will tend to be omitted in simplified speech such as baby talk and foreigner talk.

Although this hypothesis says nothing about equational sentences in languages of type B, it predicts that speakers of a language of type A will tend to omit the copula when they are attempting to simplfiy their speech. Specifically it predicts that simplified registers in regular use in the speech community will tend to omit the copula, e.g. baby talk, foreigner talk, telegraph langague, newspaper headlines. Going a step further, the hypothesis would suggest that a pidgin language whose lexical source was a type A language would tend to omit the copula.

The wording of the hypothesis in terms of possibility ("will tend to") rather than in absolute terms ("will") is based on the existence of empirical data showing considerable variation in the extent to which

the copula is actually omitted. For example, in French baby talk the copula seems to be omitted much less often than in English baby talk, although être as an auxiliary is often left out (Papa parti 'Daddy bye-bye'). Also, of the Portuguese based creoles used in the Far East in the sixteenth century some apparently had a copula while others did not (Whinnom 1965).

A further subhypothesis can be made with regard to the degrees of likelihood of omission of the copula under different conditions. This hypothesis is based on the descriptive statements made about type B languages, although their relation to the notion of simplicity is unclear.

Hypothesis 2. In simplified speech of languages of type A, the copula is more likely to be omitted under each of the following conditions than otherwise:

main clause

subject and complement both present

non-emphatic

timeless or unmarked present

third person subject

adjectival complement

non-exposed position.

The presentation of these two hypotheses constitutes in effect the outline of a research project to examine the omission of copulas in baby talk, foreigner talk, and pidgins to find the extent to which the hypotheses would be disconfirmed, confirmed in principle, or even quantified.

Some encouragement as to possible results comes from recently presented evidence (Labov 1967) that certain varieties of English which frequently omit the copula do not do so in clauses where the standard language does not permit contraction, i.e. in instances of emphasis, exposed position, or absence of one member of the clause.

5. Concluding observations. For the linguist interested in typology and language universals this paper suggests the usefulness of a taxonomy of copula and copula-like constructions in the world's languages and the elaboration of hypotheses of synchronic variation and diachronic change in this part of language. The copula seems of particular interest because of the universality of equational clauses, the widespread patterns of polysemy and suppletion and possible exceptions to general hypotheses of the status of markedness in grammar.

For the linguist interested in child language development, the paper repeats earlier suggestions that the notion of simplicity may be a useful one in accounting for the development of grammar in the child, repeats the point (Ferguson 1964) that baby talk is largely initiated by adults on the basis of existing patterns, and suggests further that the telegraphic style used by young children may in part be based on the fact that adults in their attempt to simplify their speech (i.e. use baby talk) tend to omit items such as the copula, prepositions, articles, and inflectional endings.

For the linguist interested in pidgins and creoles, the most important suggestion of the paper is probably the view that the foreigner

talk of a speech community may serve as an incipient pidgin. This view asserts that the initial source of the grammatical structure of a pidgin is the more or less systematic simplification of the lexical source language which occurs in the foreigner talk register of its speakers rather than the grammatical structure of the language(s) of the other users of the pidgin. Such a view would not, of course, deny the grammatical influence of the other language(s), but would help to explain some of the otherwise surprising similarities among distant creoles by setting the starting point in a universal simplification process. It differs from the view held by some scholars from Schuchard to the present that "the Europeans deliberately and systematically simplified and distorted their language to facilitate communication with the non-Europeans." (Goodman 1964, p. 124) by emphasizing the conventional, culturally given aspect of the linguistic simplification and by recognizing with Bloomfield the interaction "between a foreign speaker's version of a language and a native speaker's version of the foreign language" (quoted in Goodman 1964 p. 12).

Footnotes

[1]The equational clause type includes a number of semantic (and in some languages grammatically distinct) sub-types such as identity (Her father is the President of the University), class membership (Your friend is a fool), attribution of a property (The towel is wet).For the purposes of the present article these distinctions are generally disregarded, and the terms "equational clause" and "copula" are used to refer to any or all of them unless otherwise specified. For discussion of equational clauses, see Elson and Pickett 112-12; sample defintions in specific languages, cf. Sableski 1965; Sebeok 1943.

[2]It has been pointed out that in those early Indo-European languages which have equational clauses without copula, this is normal only in the third person. Cf. Meillet 1906-08 p. 20.

[3]Bally called attention to this feature of languages without copula in a more general discussion of zero and ellipsis Bally 1922 pp. 1-2.

[4]For the term "exposed" cf. Hall 1953 p. 66 fn for latter read former.

[5]For examples of this kind of Spanish, see Lynch's novel El Inglés de los Güesos in which an Englishman is portrayed as using this kind of foreigner's Spanish; e.g. p. 184 Osted moi buena conmigue ...Mí no olvida nunce.
'You very good with me...Me not forget(s) never.'

[6]On the question of order of acquisition, it is, of course, necessary to recognize that other things are not equal and that acquisition may run not

only from simple to omplex but from less effort to more effort, from heavy affect to light affect, or from high frequency to low frequency, and that interference from other parts of the language or another language may be involved.

[7]The possibility must be noted that the speaker may, in the case of language development, reorganize his internal grammar in such a way that wh$_a$t was previously primary may become derivative and vice versa. Thus a speaker who learns Handschuh as a monomorphematic lexical item meaning 'glove' may later identify it as Hand 'hand' plus Schuh 'shoe' in a compound-word construction. Similar reorganizations of grammatical constructions make it hazardous to relate a line of derivation or the ordering of a set of rules to an actual developmental sequence, but the grammar will surely offer clues which can be checked against empirical data.

[8]For an extensive discussion of marked:unmarked categories in grammatical universals see Greenberg 1966 pp. 25-55.

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